5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 MI Middle East
Bedouin M34

where wells are scarce & close together and the for-
age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these
must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair
for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the
Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage
and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised,
chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is
the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a les-
ser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great
sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty
and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an
economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure lux-
ury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk
just as humans do. They are kept and treated as house-
hold pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their
only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for
pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part
of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but
they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the
very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail
partially or completely, and then the animals die by thou-
sands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a
song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the
land. Little children die because there is no food suit-
able for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even
more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly
bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed,
and the whole community waits and prays for more rain
the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a
poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea
of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a
[illegible]

St Hartbeest D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M34

mere trifle. Probably the only part of the outfit that would have any commercial value at all is the black goat's-hair tent, which affords a poor shelter from the cold in winter and from the heat in summer. And along with extreme poverty there goes an astonishing lack of any sense of cleanliness or order. The tent of a Bedouin could be little more disorderly if it were taken by some giant hand, shaken like a dice box, and the contents allowed to rest where they fell. The furniture consists of few things and poor. There are the remnants of one or more cotton stuffed quilts. These are both bed and bed clothes. There are a few skins to hold drinking water and a few skin basins. Some shaped sticks are tied together to make camel saddles. The outfit will also include a copper kettle for the cooking of food, a battered coffee pot for the making of coffee and usually a wooden bowl. This bowl, which may be the only eating utensil belonging to the household, has probably never been washed in its history. At times milk is drunk out of it, and at times rice and meat are eaten from it. The grease with which it is covered has long since exceeded the absorption limit of the wood and for years has been plastered on to the outside. Under such circumstances the prevalence of disease excites no wonder; the wonder is that many maintain excellent health.

The Bedouins clothes are a loin cloth beneath and shirt above, which shirt resembles a loose nightgown and reaches to his ankles. Over this is worn an old disreputable *aba* or cloak, in cut resembling nothing so much as a college gown. All of these are usually in a state of great disrepair and show an acute need of laundering. The town Arabs, who look with scorn on the desert Bedouin, assert that when he buys a new undershirt, he puts

St Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 MI Middle East
Bedouin #34

parently meeting with no great obstacle on the way. In five minutes everybody is filled to repletion. Pounds of meat have been consumed and bushels of rice. The side dishes are empty. Enormous wooden bowls of buttermilk are brought in and the meal washed down with great draughts of this favorite Arab drink. It is not remarkable that after a feast everybody expects to take a nap. So ends the festivity and the Bedouin settles down once again to his meager and poverty-stricken existence in the desert.

Life as a nomad shepherd brings the Bedouin into naked and constant contact with nature. He is out of doors almost all of the time, and his tent with its rents and holes hardly serves to separate him from the outside world to any significant degree even when he is inside. The sun over him by day and the moon and stars by night, the long stretches of sand and the rough rocky plains, the sand storms which are the terror of the desert, the fierce heat of the summer and the frosts of the winter, all of these are his constant companions. He learns to know the wilderness as few know it. The tracks of the various animals in the sand are to him an easily legible history of the happenings of several days back. Thus he lives not simply in contact with nature but rather immersed in it. The desert may be cruel, but he pines away if transplanted. His life may be hard, but he wants nothing else.

Yet strangely enough, in spite of his intense love for the desert and its freedom, all the beauties in nature around him fall on blind eyes as far as the Bedouin is concerned. Even the desert sunset and the moon-lit sand dunes apparently stir no responsive chord in his heart. It is as if all such things had been stripped off

2k. Fisher S-4 (no date) 1960 M1 Middle Eas. M1
Bedouin MJ4.15

the group. Yet although tribal solidarity and discipline are conspicuous features, it has been the weakness of Badawin society throughout the ages that political combinations larger than the tribe have been achieved merely for a very short time. An outstanding leader has brought together a number of tribes into one larger unit, but union has proved temporary; and more often than not on the death of the leader, his organisation has dissolved again into smaller groups. Large-scale political organisation is therefore not a feature of Badawin society, and resulting inter-tribal feuds, inveterate warfare, political instability and inconstancy have had an effect not merely on desert and steppe life, but also on that of the settled lands of the arid borders. It is also possible to see why, in the absence of strong internal political organisation, so much of the Middle East has in the past fallen under the control of outside powers.

To each tribe belong certain rights of pasture and occupation. The limits of each tribal territory are carefully defined, and generally comprise a summer and a winter camping ground. Exact size of territory usually has a certain relation to the physical force and prestige commanded by each tribe, and limits therefore vary from one period to another. Weaker tribes seek 'protection' from a larger.

As a sample of tribal division, the distribution of Badawin in Syria is given below. It should be noted that in certain instances tribal territories cross international frontiers, and thus there arise special problems of administration. Agreements have been concluded between the governments concerned, whereby nomads in effect assume temporarily the nationality of the country in which they find themselves.

Because of the necessity for constant movement, the material culture of the Badawin is poor. Chief possession of the tribesman, after his animals, is a tent, usually black, and woven of camel or goat hair. When in good repair, these tents are quite waterproof—sufficient to withstand the infrequent, but severe downpours which occur—and the size of the tent, shown by the number of tent poles used, is an indication of the affluence and social standing of the owner. The interior is divided, on the right for men, and on the left for women. One side away from the wind is usually left open, with a coffee hearth in front. The coffee hearth is the social centre of the household; and the head of the family, although leaving the entire preparation of food to his womenfolk, will himself undertake the preparation and serving of coffee. True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar, but

Shirvet, Beni Sakhr and the Sukhrin. Until recently these nomads were chiefly engaged in sheep and goat rearing, while camel-breeding has been progressively abandoned.

Already in the 1930's all the Beersheba tribes were in an advanced stage of the process of transition to permanent settlement. While before the First World War the Negev Bedouin depended almost exclusively on stock-breeding, in 1931 42 858 of them claimed cultivation, and only 5 113 animal rearing, as their chief source of livelihood.[1]

This development was the result of a series of economic factors: the decline of the camel market,[2] successive years of drought and famine in the Negev,[3] the increased value attached to land in the wake of Zionist land purchases and the ready market that agricultural produce found in the growing Jewish settlements.

Many Bedouin began to attend to cultivation in a more regular fashion although they remained for the time being semi-nomads wandering with their flocks except for the seasons of sowing and harvesting.

The shaikhs and more prominent members of the tribes began

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1. Report of 1931 census of Palestine
2. This loss was largely compensated by breeding other types of livestock.
3. More than half of the years 1871 - 1939 were seasons of drought. The war years 1914-18 constituted a continuous period of famine the severity of which the Negev had not experienced prior to the war. cf:

[illegible] p. 1939, pp. 80-181.

342 as early as the 1930's to have since become concentrated for their private use.[1]

361 During the years of prosperity in the middle of the 30's a
241 number of Bedouin groups in the Negev made use of mechanized lorries which they borrowed from the Jewish colonists of Gedereh. But all the tribesmen, however, were actively engaged in agriculture. As late as 1942 the Tarabin had their lands cultivated by tenant farmers and day laborers from South Judean villages.[2]

A166 Among the Bedouin of Northern Palestine the trend towards
241 sedentarization dates back to the 1860's, when many of the tribes-
243 men began to engage in agriculture.[3] In the 1930's all the sands of the Sharon, Jezreel and the Galilee were in the possession of land which was cultivated either by the tribesmen or tenant farmers.[4] Contrary to the Bedouin of the Beersheba district the Bedouin of Northern Palestine were quick to learn the value of law and order.[5] Under the influence of neighboring Fellahin the tribesmen have become increasingly attached to the land and pre-occupied with agriculture. Although methods of cultivation remained very primitive, an improvement of conditions has been observed since the 1930's.[7]

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1. Ashbrook, 1938, p. 17
2. Ibid.
3. Fellah, 1942
4. Ashbrook, 1938, p. 15
5. Ibid., pp. 3-4
6. Ibid., p. 16
7. Ibid., p. 27

BEDOUINS MI4

Social transformation of the Bedouin

When the Bedouin settle down, they gradually adopt the fellah's mode of living. As their contact with village and city increases, they become familiar with modern implements, watches, oil-lamps, etc.

The Ghawarneh of Northern Palestine, for example, live like peasants engaged in intensive cultivation.[1] They grow rice, maize and peas. The women are occupied with net weaving, the men join them in this work during the slack season in the fields. They still dress like Bedouin, and most of them live in huts. There are stone houses in which the family chief's dwell.[2] After settlement, Bedouin customs and habits give way gradually to those of the fellahin.

In the Ein-Fitn refugee camp (northern Syria) there are Arab refugees who claim to be members of tribes that lived until recently in Upper Galilee, around Lake Tiberias, near Safureh and Safad. In July 1948, an inquiry was conducted among the members of the camp concerning tribal habits and health conditions.[3] The members of the tribes were agricultural folk, some small traders and artisans. A part of them used to live permanently in stone houses, others built in houses during the winter months, in tents during the harvesting season. In a number of tribes only the wealthy had houses, the poorer members lived permanently in tents. Most of the tribal people were settled, one group for only 30 to 70 years.

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1. This was the situation prior to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.
2. Ashkenazi, 1938, p. 48
3. Schnell, 1950

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins M24

621 about. Yet gossips they are, and expert in tearing others' reputations.
658 Many a desert tragedy has resulted from too glib a tongue. Ordinary sexual matters are discussed before small children with a frankness
664 and simplicity which modern educationists might approve, but which an English person may find at times embarrassing. The bearing of their young by camels, mares and ewes is not only an everyday topic, but mothers will take their children to watch the progress of such events, alongside their menfolk.

637 On the whole, Badawin women are extremely moral, though they might readily succumb to temptation were it to come their way. Fortunately it does not.

They go in for love affairs, of course, and married women are not above falling desperately in love with other men than their husbands. A woman's only hope in such a case (unless her man happens to be her first cousin) is to tell her husband the whole truth, and beg him to divorce her. This happens fairly often among the rank and file, though not among the senior ladies of the tribe or the shaikh's wives. Sir Richard Burton has said somewhere that among Badawin women who were separated from their menfolk during long absences in the desert when at war, abnormal and unnatural living was not uncommon. This I think a libel, or at least a grave exaggeration.

THE DAILY ROUND OF A BADAWIN FAMILY—"AN AUTUMN STUDY"

192 Time, Early November; Place, Wafra, 30 miles from the sea in the Kuwait Neutral Zone.

[342] 512 The tent is pitched on a slight rise in the ground, so that if rain comes the water will not flood the interior. Everyone is busy from earliest dawn to nightfall, especially the women and girls. A little rain has fallen, the first for eight months, and grass has just started sprouting in the hollows. Both camels and sheep are thin and scarcely able to walk any distance. The summer has been a terribly severe one. More rain is urgently needed, else the grass that has come up will wither again. The head of the family has ridden off on his mare the previous evening to see if better grazing exists 20 miles away. He will not be back till sunset to-day.

000 At 4 a.m. one of the men-servants gives the *'adhan* (call to prayer),

h Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

CHAPTER IV

The Tent and its Furnishings

347 [246] A Badawin tent or *bait al sha'ar* is made up of strips of black or brown coarse cloth known as *fala'ij* (plural: *fijids*). These are woven from goats' hair or from sheep's wool, never from camel hair, so that the name "camel hair tents" is a misnomer. The length of each strip used, and the number of such strips, naturally depends on the importance and circumstances of the owner. An average shaikh, for instance, will have a tent of, say, six extra-broad strips, each seventy feet long and supported by four poles, while a poor man may have cheap narrow strips to his tent, each twenty-five feet long, with only two poles, possibly with one.

The true Badawin shaikh does not go in for bigger tents than the one described, as his movements from camp to camp would be hampered thereby. Among the leading Shaikhs of the 'Anizah and Northern Shammar, such as ibn Sha'alan, ibn Hathal, Ajil al Yawar and also among Arabian princes like the Al Sa'ud, the Shaikhs of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, tents of enormous size are the fashion. These, however, are practically used only when the owners are going out for the spring months to certain standing camps, from which they will sally forth and hunt gazelle, or hawk *houbara*. They would never be used for migration purposes.

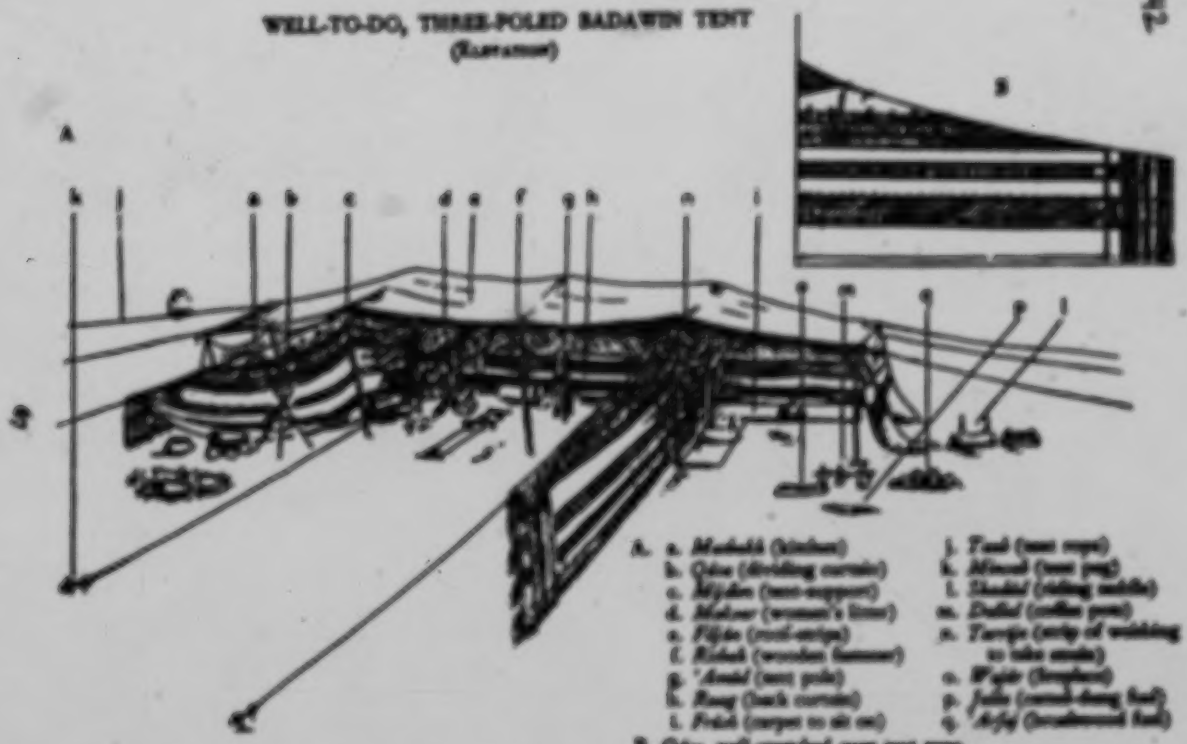
To return to the tent: the strips are all sewn together so as to form one long rectangular whole, and are then raised up on the tent poles (*'amdan*) and the sides stretched taut by means of tent ropes (*awtad*).

The tent is then divided, usually by two or three long and gaily decorated curtains, known as *gata* (pronounced *gata*), which hang on the tent poles inside the tent to a height of some six feet from the ground. They have their ends attached to the roof at the back of the tent, and to the roof and the tent ropes on the open side respectively.

Each *gata* has one of its ends especially gaily decorated (see drawing of

WELL-TO-DO, THREE-POLED BADAWIN TENT

(Elevation)



A. a. *Mudakik* (kitchen)
b. *Qâa* (dividing curtain)
c. *Mijâbeh* (tent-support)
d. *Mahâsar* (women's room)
e. *Fijâm* (mid-strips)
f. *Rikâb* (wooden hammer)
g. *'Amûd* (tent pole)
h. *Rang* (back curtain)
i. *Fâsh* (canvas in all on)
j. *Tarâ* (tent rope)
k. *Mîtad* (tent peg)
l. *Shukâl* (tethering rope)
m. *Dukkî* (saddle gear)
n. *Tarrâja* (strip of webbing to take cords)
o. *Wijâr* (fringe)
p. *Jidâr* (curtain along back)
q. *'Arâja* (semi-circular flap)

B. *Qâa*, well-ventilated cover over tent ropes.

Note.—A wall of *'arâja* hessian (Tawa or Andkan) is built in a semi-circle round the front of the tent to keep out wind in winter. Not shown in the diagram.

A THREE-POLED BADAWIN TENT (Saroonee)

Note.—A wall of *safaf* is built up outside the tent on one or two sides to keep out the wind in winter. It is known as *Sour* or *Sufeefa*.

a. kitchen
b. *gata* (dividing curtain)
c. *mafrash* (front tent pole)
d. *mukeem* (Door)
e. *fijjin* (roof ridge)
f. *rukab*
g. *mafrash*
h. *'amud* (rear pole)
i. *rang* (back curtain)
j. *gata*
k. general portion of tent
l. *rang*
m. women's quarters
n. *amud* (rear ridge)
o. *mukeem* (rear peg)
p. *shukkal* (saddle)
q. *dukkal* (front saddle pole)
r. *mereja* (webbing on atmospheric tent against winds of ridge)

Tent Attachments

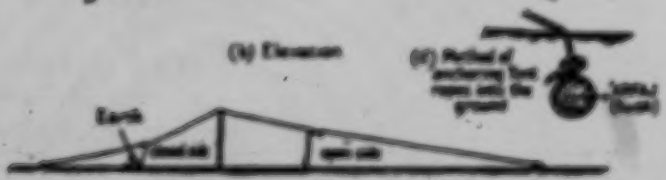
3/2

gales pp. 67 and 68). This downwind end must face outwards on the side of the tent which is open. If the wind changes, and the reverse side of the tent is used, the guys must be taken down, turned round and refixed.

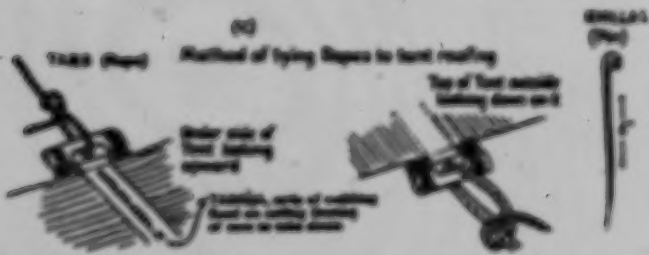
DETAILS

(a) Profile

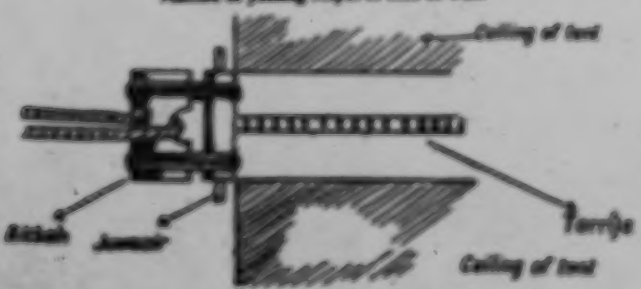
(b) Elevation



(c) Method of tying Ropes to tent roofing



Method of joining Ropes to Side of Tent



L. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Notebooks 1934

342. The number of tent ropes which support a tent in front and rear depend on the number of poles the tent has. Opposite each pole there will be two ropes, one in front and one behind, so that a tent of three poles will have six ropes (three on either side). Apart from these front

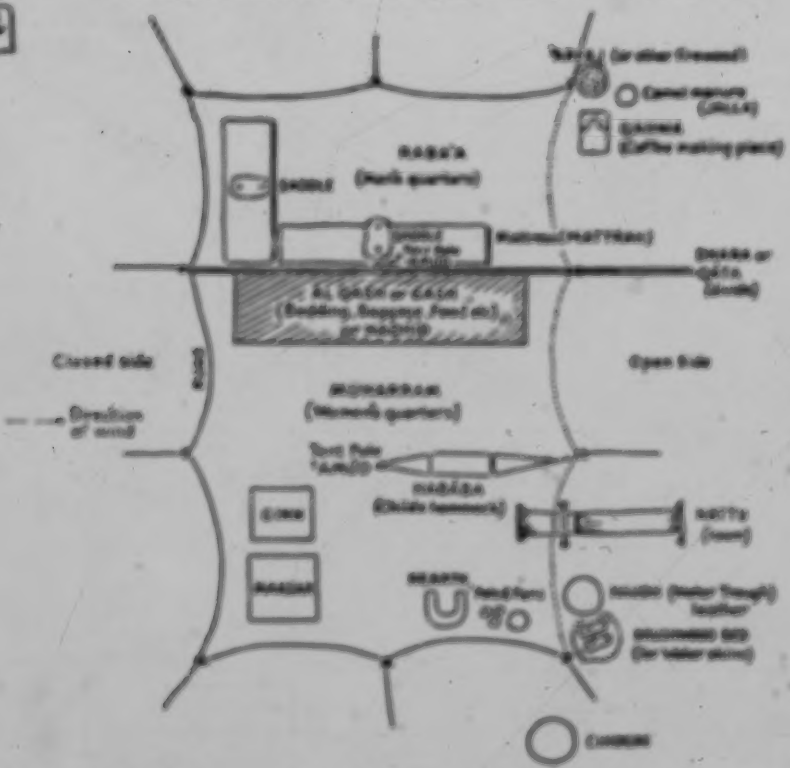
WELL-TO-DO, TWO-POLED BADAWIN TENT

(PLAN)

NOTE.—In Eastern Arabia the *Rahe'a* (the men's portion of the tent) is always at the eastern end.

In a stone or mud house the men's portion is known as Al Diwaniyah.

[Pl. 362]



and rear ropes, the two ends of the tents are kept stretched out taut by six other ropes, three at each end.

On the reverse side of each tent and stretching well round so as to shut in the two open ends, and with enough material to spare to close them at night from the front, are two long stretches of cloth known as

b Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

rugg, made up of four narrow strips each, which join in the centre 342
of the reverse side of the tent; these are attached to the tent sides by a series of hodkins known as *khilal*. The whole then hangs down in the form of a heavy curtain which, where it meets the earth, is buried in the sand for its whole length, or pegged down if the ground is hard.

The lowest strip which always is covered or buried in sand is of inferior material, as it gets most wear and damage from white ants and rain.

We thus have in the completed pitched tent the following main parts:

(a) The *roof of the bait al sha'ar* consisting of six strips *fijim* (singular: *fidi'i*) joined together.
(b) The poles *'amdan* (singular: *'amud*).
(c) The partition curtains *ghas*.
(d) The two rear curtains *rugg* joined together at centre of the back of the tent and stretching round the two ends.
(e) The tent ropes *amadi* (singular: *amd*).

THE QATA OR DIVIDING CURTAIN

Patterns commonly found on Muteir and 'Ajman *ghas*, or the curtains which divide the tent, together with the particular names under which they are known, are given below. Although the number and name of each strip always remain the same, the actual pattern on each strip varies according to the tribe, and the time that is given to the making of each strip. This in particular applies to strips (1), (2) and (3).

The *ghas* or divide is composed of four strips sewn together as under, and commencing from the top.

(1) The first strip or *naif* is all black with pattern (a) in the centre and pattern (b) above. Width one span plus four fingers.

(2) The second strip or *al ghadir* is a white strip with a one-inch-wide black border in the centre of which is pattern (a). The width of *al ghadir* is two spans.

(3) The third strip or *al ha'ij* follows below *al ghadir*. Its upper half is black and lower half white with pattern (c) in the centre. Width also two spans.

(4) The fourth and last strip is *al mura'ba*. This is the lowest piece and lies along the ground. Its upper half is white and its lower half light or dark brown. Width two spans.

L Dickson G-5 (1919-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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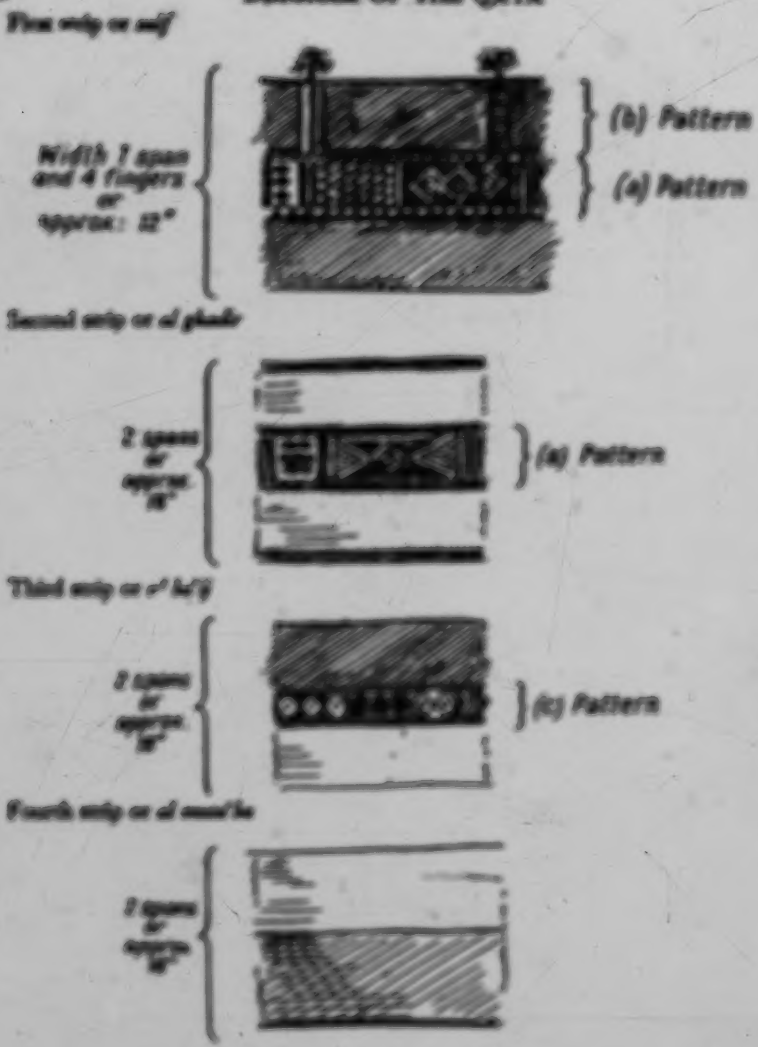
342. DIAGRAM OF THE QÁTA



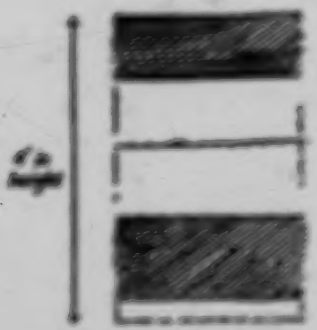
THE MIAS (or back curtains of a tent)

These consist of four strips sewn one on top of the other horizontally so as to form a long narrow curtain. Below is given a pattern very commonly used in the Kuwait and Hasa desert. The well-to-do

L Dickson G-6 (1929-47) 1951 ME I Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

342

men goes in for handsome black and white rugs, while the poor man practically always confines himself to plain browns or black ones.



These four strips are sewn together and placed round the back and sides of the Bedouin tent. The patterns vary slightly, some are without the second white strip. A coarse piece is woven and sewn along the bottom edge. This goes on the ground, and is usually covered with sand to weigh it down. The shade of brown varies according to the wool available.

The weaving of the tent material is largely done by the inhabitants of the towns and villages bordering on the desert, and both in Kuwait and the neighbouring hamlets of Jahrah and the Qusur a good trade is done in this commodity. This does not mean that this work is not largely done in the tribes themselves, but the best qualities and strongest materials for shelter* were probably come from the towns.

Actually every humble tribal woman makes and renews the worn parts of her own tent, and only those with means go into the towns to buy. This was confirmed to me by Rifa'a, wife of Sheikh Thowainy abu Sifra of the Mutair in 1934, and by many other women. The best and most sought after material is made of goats'* hair alone. It is jet black and is thicker than that made from sheep's wool. It also looks better. A good and favourite material is also of goats' hair and sheep's wool mixed. It has a smoky brown and black appearance and is handsome also. A serviceable feature are the tent ropes. They are made very 251 long, on the principle of a ship's anchor, better to take the strain. 342

* Probably the best are made by the Beni Lam tribe now known in Iraq.

L Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI J Kuwait
Jerdouins 1634

These ropes are attached to the ground by wooden pegs if the ground is firm, but if the soil is sandy the practice is to dig a hole two feet deep, tie the end of the rope round a bundle of *'arfaj* and bury the whole in the earth. An excellent anchor is thus formed, and a rope so treated rarely comes away. When a man first buys a tent, he purchases the poles separately, next the necessary rolls of tent stripe of the lengths he requires, then the *ghtas*, ropes, side poles, etc., and lastly the back curtains.

He then hands the tent stripe to his women, who start sewing them together under the experienced eye of one of the older women. Much skill and care is needed to sew up a tent so that it stands straight and does not give way at any of the seams, which are carefully drawn together and sewn with extra-strong all-goats'-hair thread.

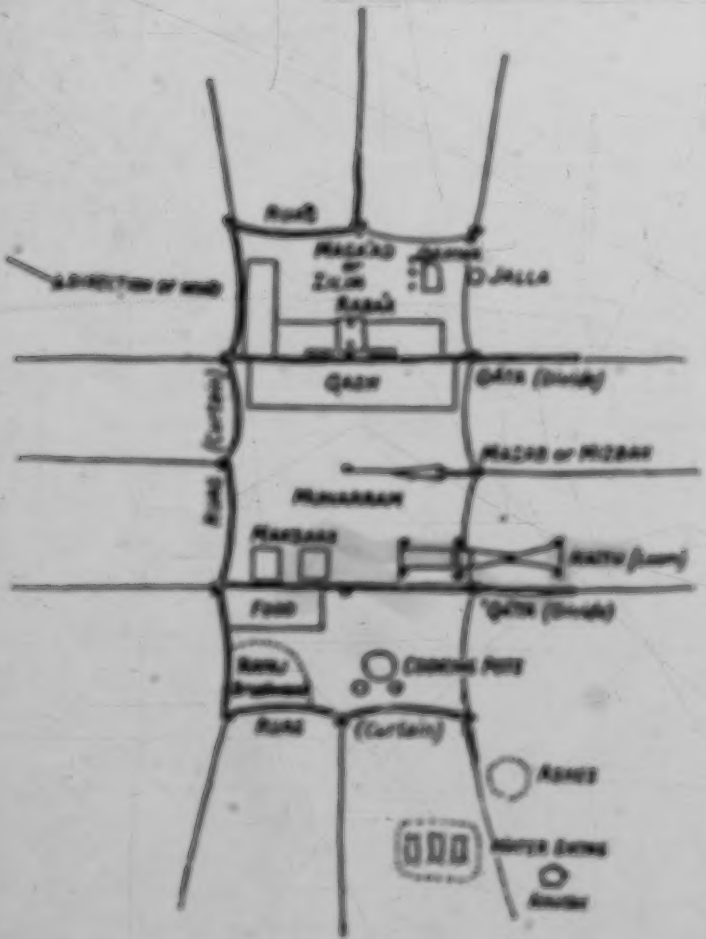
After the tent roof has been put together the *sarrija* (plural: *sraw'if*) have to be sewn on from side to side on the underside to support the poles and take the strain of the ropes. These are extra-strong white-and-black patterned stripe 6 inches in width (like the Indian *sasoor*). Immediately over the spot where the roof bears on the tent poles, two strips of wood are sewn into the tent roof, each 1½ feet long, so as to prevent the tops of the poles tearing open the roof. Each wooden strip is called a *gusbe*. These wooden strips are not evident to the naked eye as they are rolled sausage fashion into the tent roof where the centre stripe join. Each pole is placed exactly under the centre of the wood, and when in position does not damage the tent cloth. In the north proper holes are made for the tops of the poles in the tent ceiling, but not so among the tribes of Hasa and Nejd.

Lastly the *ribbak* (plural: *arbak*) or semicircular wood fasteners have to be sewn on to the ends of the *sarrija* on which the ropes are fastened to the tent sides. This is a very important operation, as there must be no weakness here. The ropes (always thick hempen ones) are now tied to the tent and everything is ready for pitching.

The pitching process is always done by the women, assisted by servants and slaves, occasionally also by a young son. It is supposed to be the women's particular job in life. The head of the family (*rais al bait*) directs the operation, and it is surprising to see how every person has a particular task allotted to him or her, knows it and sticks to it at every tent-pitching. The daughters of the house, for instance,

I. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins 1(3)4

A THREE-POLED BADAWIN TENT (Plan)



usually do the hammering in of the pegs with the long stone instrument known as *al fās*, while the menservants attend to the poles and supports, etc.

The following are the orders the owner of the tent gives to his women and servants in the form of a regular drill, addressing individuals by name. Of course they are accompanied by a lot of chat and talk which need not be detailed here.

L Dickson G-1 (1923-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Reference 1424

942 (1) "Spread out the tent ye *'ajjad*" (O my people) (from its rolled up position when taken off the camel's back).
944 (2) "Stretch out the ropes ye *mukkid*" (O children) (so that they are at right angles to the tent).
(3) "Anchor the rope ends in the ground ye *fukus wa fukus*" (O Su-and-Su).
(4) or "Drive in the pegs and wind the ropes round them — *Nasir*."
(5) "Tighten the ropes ye *Hazza, ye Wadda*."
(6) "Take a pull on the end ropes ye *Marqad, ye Nasir*."
(7) "Affix the *majadim*" (front-side, support-poles.) This is done on side away from wind.
(8) "Raise the centre poles"—the men's job.
(9) "Raise the back side poles and remaining end side poles."
(10) "Now lay to and take a pull at all the ropes once more."
(11) "Now *rawwaga al hait*, i.e. attach the *rung* or back and side curtains, and cover the lower edge with sand to keep them down."
(12) "Now affix the *gita* or partition curtains."
(13) Lastly, "Spread out the carpet and the *dawakkah* and get ready the women's and men's portions of the tent". Women's quarters centre and left (*marqad al harim*), men's quarters right (*marqad al rijal*).

The tent is now fully pitched and the women place their treasures and stores in the centre portion of the tent, including their linen (*makzar, gita*, etc.), sleeping gear, blankets, food, etc., and transfer to the end compartment the cooking pots, cooking utensils, etc., turning it into a sort of kitchen.

MEN'S PORTION OF THE TENT

952 In the men's portion of the tent are then unrolled a well-worn carpet
879 or two, the best *dawakkah* (mattress), to sit on, and the master's own camel saddle covered with white or black sheepskin. Pillows (*masnad*) are placed on both sides of this camel saddle, and also behind it for the guest's back to rest on, and generally the place is turned into a neat guest chamber for anyone who may
[411] come. The master now hangs up his rifle on a hook attached to the
415 tent pole in the guest chamber, and prepares a fireplace to make coffee
272 in the centre of the floor by digging out a shallow circular hole (*wajar*). This done, he gets out his row of three coffee pots (*dalla*), also a fourth "work" pot, and lays them alongside the fireplace, together with the *makwadas* (coffee roasters) and *yad al makwadas* (coffee-berry stirrer).

below is ready to make laben (sour milk) with, or, if necessary, to hang a sheep's carcase on, preparatory to skinning it.

A fuller description and names of the articles found in both men's and women's portions of the tent will be found in Chapter V.

POSITION OF TENT WITH REGARD TO THE WIND

Tents are always pitched with one of their long sides facing in the direction of the wind. Hence in the eastern and north-eastern part of Arabia, where there are two very common prevailing winds, the *Shemâl* (north-west wind) and the *Kaus* (south-east wind), it is the general rule to see black tents pitched with their longer axis facing towards the north-west. This does not mean that tents are opened towards the side from which the wind is blowing—the contrary is the case, and the side of the tent is always closed in the direction from which the wind is blowing, and the sheltered side opened.

The side which is open is called *wejh al bait* (the face of the tent), the closed side *gefa al bait* (the back of the tent). Should the wind suddenly change, as often happens during the rainy season, it is necessary for the inhabitants of the tent to change the "face" of the tent at once. Otherwise the wind gets under the tent, billows it up, and if it does not carry it away, at least causes the tent poles to fall and lets the tent then collapse upon its occupants. A sudden change of wind therefore means confusion and lots of shouting. The owner's first and immediate orders are, "Change the back wall, my children, the wind has come", or in Arabic, *Jaina al hawa, dakkaru al bait ya awalad*. The excited women and servants thereupon rush about, drop the front bamboo supports (facing the wind), quickly unpin the back curtains and carry them round to the side from which the wind is blowing, and again as quickly pin them on to the tent roof, and bury their bottom edges in the sand; the side poles are next put up; the edge of the tent roof facing away from the wind, each under a rope, and lastly the tent partition curtains are taken down, reversed and fixed up again with the embroidered ends extending out of the tent and thrown back over the tent ropes. The whole process takes a surprisingly short time.

Of course, in very hot weather the Badawin wants to take advantage of the slightest breeze, so he rolls up the back curtain or unpins several

b Dickson c-3 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

342 yards of it so as to let portions of it lie on the ground: the breeze in
132 this manner percolates into every part of the tent. If the sun is very strong, a locally woven carpet (usually some shade of orange) is hung up near the tent roof between poles and is pinned to the underside of the tent roof. This doubles the thickness of the tent and brings relief.

In very cold weather, on the other hand, the tent can be closed from the front by drawing inwards the embroidered ends of the *ghta* (which already extend several yards outside the tent) and by joining the ends near the middle of the tent side. The top edge is then pinned to the edge of the roof of the tent as is done in the case of the back curtain. This encloses the tent completely and gives great cosiness and warmth to the occupants. Similarly, the ends of the *rsag* are brought right round the guest quarters and the woman's cookhouse respectively, and turn those places into warm corners to sit in.

NOTE.—The men's quarter of a tent or *rahe'a* is always situated at the east end of the tent, irrespective of which way the tent is facing. This is the universal rule in Eastern and North-Eastern Arabia.

Similarly it is the rule for a tent to be pitched with its longer axis at right angles to the north-west wind (*Shamal*). In inner Najd, and especially among 'Utaiba tribe, the longer axis facing the north-west is the rule, and the tent is opened at its ends only. The *rahe'a* here is at southern end.

THE TENT DOGS

231 Every tent has its watch-dogs, and also (especially amongst the 'Ajman, 'Awazim and Murrah) a *salúqi* or two. The former are fierce, shaggy animals who usually have their ears cut off short to make them good fighters. Their heads are broad, rather like our bull-terrier type, and they are fierce and very powerfully built. These dogs guard the camels and sheep at night from wolves and strangers, and are trained to move round and round the tents all night in a large circle. The incoming or departing guest usually has a busy time keeping off these savage dogs, who bark at his heels in a most disconcerting manner, and are only kept back by a continual motion of his cane behind him, or by the shouts of the occupants of the tent. The watch-dog usually
231 sleeps outside the women's apartments and is fed with little bits of rice,
9/5 bread and dates that are left over from the meals. It is never allowed inside the tents, being unclean (*najis*). The *salúqis* (pronounced *salúgi*,

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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231 325 plural: *salag*), on the other hand, are regarded as clean, especially by those Badawin following the Maliki tenets of Islam (who are in the majority in Hasa and Kuwait), and they are allowed to enter tents and sleep in the women's portion at will. They are valued for hunting purposes, and are taught to kill hare and gazelle for the pot. Great care is taken that there shall be no interbreeding between the tent watch-dogs and the *salúqi*, and when the female *salúqi* of the household is on heat one of her hind legs is attached by a leather thong to her collar, thus forcing her to sit down, which effectually prevents a heavy dog covering her.

A STRANGER ARRIVING AT A TENT

516 A stranger arriving must approach a Badawin tent from the front only. It is the worst of bad form to come up from the back. He must then approach the guest side of the tent and halt and make his camel kneel while some way off. This shows that he wants a night's rest or some food. He must never approach or halt his camel near the women's end of the tent (*muharram*). The purpose of this custom is to give the women time to adjust their *burqas* or veils whilst the visitor is some distance off. Were the visitor to come up from behind, he might come upon an unveiled woman attending to nature or washing her hair, or cleaning kitchen utensils.

FAVOURITE SPOTS FOR PITCHING TENTS

342 In choosing a tent site the proximity of water is, of course, the first essential. Next, the nature of the grazing decides where a man will wish to pitch his tent. If he is migrating with the tribe or part of the tribe, the tent owner leaves the selection of the area to be camped on to the shaikh, but tries for the convenience of himself and his family to get as close as possible to a sandy nullah or dry water course with 342 high banks. This is very important, for it allows the whole household, 515 and especially the women, to attend to their toilet and other sanitary 514 duties out of sight and in sandy surroundings which are ideally healthful. In this connection a Badawin (male or female) never unnecessarily soils the ground, but makes a point of digging a small hole in the sand, which he afterwards fills in. If water is scarce, as more often than not

L Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait

342 it is, sand may be used for the necessary ablutions in place of water.
515 So the cleaner and more handy the sandy bed of the nullah, the happier
514 are the occupants of the tent.

The phrase "proximity of water" is used in a relative sense only. In summer it must, of course, be close, within at most half a mile, but preferably much closer. In winter, however, when camels are not watered at all, and sheep and mares drink only once in four days, camps may be pitched twenty or thirty miles from any well. The household water is brought out on camel-back and in large and small skins, whilst sheep are sent off to drink at the wells, or in exceptional circumstances have water brought to them on camels.

CHANGING THE CAMPING GROUND

515 For sanitary reasons the camping ground is changed every eight or
233 ten days, but especially to provide new grazing for the camels and sheep. An ordinary change of ground usually involves a march of ten or twelve miles, always provided water is handy. This is not in any sense a "migration", which will be described in a later chapter.

1492 When it is time to move, tents are struck, and tents and other heavy material are loaded on to the male camels (*jawal*), which are stronger and more suited for the work than the females: lighter gear, spare water, etc., are placed on selected females, and of course the family
[291] themselves mount on riding camels, the women moving off sheltered in their *maksars* or *ginns*, the tops of which are canopied over with bright coloured woollen or cotton material, as a protection both from the eyes of men and from the sun. The men go before on their *dhalúls*. If an individual householder with half a dozen tents is changing ground, he himself heads the procession, while his sheep and milch camels either follow, grazing as they go on a flank or in the rear, or have already been sent on ahead. When nearing the new ground, the head of the house rides ahead, selects the site for the tents, makes his camel kneel *mawokh al dhalúl* and declares this to be the new camping ground.

701 If a whole tribe is changing ground the fighting men move out first
221 under their leader, all of them riding *dhalúls* and with mares and horses attached to their saddles by long leading ropes. Scouts (*shár*) have

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A Lewd Story

Chap. XLIV

AN 'AJMAN STORY TOLD AT THE EXPENSE OF THE 'AWAZIM

539 The 'Awazim tribe use a curious expression which differs from
342 that of all other tribes. When they want to put up the back and side walls of their tent (*rowg*) instead of saying, *Ya fulan rowg al bait* ("O, So-and-so, place the side curtains round the tent"), as is said by all self-respecting tribes, they say, *Ya fulan, izzir al bait* ("So-and-so, make the tent respectable"). This particular expression is said to recall a rather lewd story about their tribe, of which they are heartily ashamed. The story is of 'Ajman origin and is as follows:

639 A young 'Ajman warrior once had his tent close to that of an 'Azmi (singular of 'Awazim), who was on very friendly terms with him. Both young men had pretty sisters who often played together, when their brothers were out with the camels or away raiding. The young men themselves were unmarried, as neither had the wherewithal to buy himself a wife. One day as the two lads were coming home after a long day's hunting, the 'Ajman youth said to the 'Azmi, "What do you say to exchanging sisters this evening—I take yours and you take mine, no one is about or near us, let us enjoy ourselves?" The 'Azmi having agreed, both on reaching their camp told their sisters. The girls also agreed, but the 'Ajman youth before he actually sent his sister off to his friend's tent warned her saying, "Be very careful not to let that low-born 'Azmi really maltreat you; if you do, I shall certainly kill you. When he comes to make love you must roll about the floor and avoid his embrace, and generally prevent him working his will on you."

The two youths then took each the other's sister to bed, but the clever 'Ajman girl would not allow the 'Azmi to get near her, and by rolling about and ever escaping his clutches, managed to do as her brother had told her. Maddened with disappointment the 'Azmi called out to his sister in the other tent saying, "Do not let my friend touch you but do as this one is doing, roll about, roll about (*rowagi, rowagi*)". His sister's voice came in reply, "My brother, I cannot, I cannot, it is already too late".

Since that time the 'Awazim tribe never use the expression *rowagi al beit* to a woman, or to a man *rowag al bait*.

water), and so forth, until he had completed the tale of the road. Armed with the information he had gained, he led the Banī Mālik to Safwan, where they overthrew and almost exterminated the 'Ajwād, sparing only a handful of men and forty women, or according to another version of the story forty women with child. The remnant, whatever may have been its composition, took refuge in the Hawizah marshes, but returned after a short period to 'Iraq, where they were joined by the Bushur, who claim descent from the Rawāshid 'Anizah, the Shuwaifat, a tribe of Southern Arabian origin (Qahtan), and the Jawasim, long settled in Mesopotamia. Shāhīn, by virtue of his relationship with the Al Khamāshah and his military powers, had assumed the leadership of the Banī Mālik, and to him the 'Ajwād addressed themselves with proposals of peace. He demanded for the killing of his father no payment of blood money, but that he should be accorded the honours of overlord, that they should kiss his hand when they approached him, and that he should not be required to rise in response to their salutation. To this stipulation, which was regarded as an instance of high generosity, they agreed, and the Banī Mālik and 'Ajwād, united under one chief, made so formidable a combination that they attracted a third ally, the Banī Sa'īd, a tribe of the Jazirah. These three formed and still form the Muntafiq league.

The three divisions as we know them are not tribes, but tribal groups. The Banī Sa'īd, who are by far the smallest, appear to be the most cohesive. Their district lies in little-known country in the desert between the Tigris and the Gharraf. Though they own some cultivation of the tail of the great canals they would seem to approach the Badawin more closely in their mode of life than is the case with the other two members of the league, and their constituents have the character of sections of a homogeneous tribe rather than that of independent units gathered into a confederacy.

The 'Ajwād are the least compact. Their country is on the Gharraf, and the Euphrates above and below Nāsiriyah; they are therefore much more accessible. They are riverain Arabs of the Shawīyah type (Shawīwī), half-settled cultivators and half-nomadic owners of flocks. They spend the late winter, spring and early summer in the desert with their sheep, leaving some of their number in the reed villages by the rivers to till the fields.

Appendix I

703 *Arms.*—The tribe is particularly well armed with modern rifles, the majority of the men having the Turkish mauser, while the long .303, short .303, German mauser, and Turkish cavalry mauser are to be found. The British short .303 is not popular, it being considered too clumsy for horsemen to carry.

Ammunition appears to be fairly plentiful, but in wartime would be the first supply to fail. No doubt Ibn Sa'ud would remedy this by a general issue. The 'Ajman look upon the 'Awazim, the other powerful tribe in Hasa, as their hereditary serfs, but Ibn Sa'ud has given the latter the status of an independent tribe. Great enmity exists to-day between the two communities in consequence.

619 The best-known characteristics of the 'Ajman are:
186

(a) Their hot-headedness in attack, which is liable to get them into difficulties.

(b) Their loyalty to each other. "Touch one and touch all" may be called their motto.

(c) Their remarkable propensity for charming. They love a joke.

231 The tribe breeds large numbers of camels and a few horses, but practically no sheep.

483-92 Their tents are usually black or brown, the side pieces and inner partitions having several broad white horizontal stripes in the centre, peculiar to themselves. 'Ajman women cover their faces with a shiny cloth mask of rather unattractive appearance as opposed to the black hanging *burqa* of the Murrah, 'Awazim and Rashaidah, which looks well.

609 The individuals of the tribe are hospitable to strangers, and the women,
562 like the Murrah, will mix freely with guests, once t'e preliminary suspicious feelings are removed. They very much dislike their women going into the towns, however.

619 The 'Ajman look upon the Dhafir perhaps as their principal enemies, but are also hostile traditionally to Murrah, Shammar, Shei, and Sahul tribes.

721 In the 1929-30 Ikhwan rebellion against Ibn Sa'ud about half of the 'Ajman allied themselves with the Murrah, half remained staunch.

In the same rebellion the 'Ajman, though camped close to the Kuwait border, carried out several daring and successful long-distance raids to the vicinity of Riyadh and Hufuf, both distant three hundred and fifty miles from their base, proving their well-known talent and capacity for distant forays. In one of these raids the Shaikh of the Al Misra section (Ibn 'Uthain) destroyed fourteen of Ibn Sa'ud's cars in the Dahana between Riyadh and Hufuf.

641 The 'Ajman, with the collapse of the Ikhwan movement, may be said to be sullenly hostile to Ibn Sa'ud, and the northern sections would like to

25: Thesiger T-3 (1944-47) 1949 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

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P 396 (A)

[CAPTION APPEARS ON P. 396 (B). ANALYST]

35: Theiger T-3 (1944-47) 1949 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

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[illegible] One of the most stark Arab scenes pictured were Nomadic evil. This type is [illegible] exclusively in semi-dwelling tribes and is never seen in the cities or plain areas. Beside the two camels in scene, the camel, the long pointed stones of a Western Arab; on foot, placed upside-down, is a leather trough from which his camels are watered. Beyond the Nomadic encampment stand Arab children, a family hut, some of other camels, where the dates and a few grass, the little girls wear [illegible] only a fringe round their hips. The children are [illegible] naturally a small [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] of other animals from the [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible]

T 896 (B)

woman. Their mode of life is very much like
that of other Anaiza Beduins (not like Sulubba),
but owing to the taint in their blood, no Beduin
tribe will intermarry with them.

OTHER BASE-BORN TRIBES

While the Sulubba are the lowest of the ignoble tribes, they are not alone. Arabia is full of base-born tribesmen, with whom the "thoroughbred" Beduin will not intermarry.

Hazim

These people seem to be a tribe of almost as low standing as the Sulubba. They do not, however, work as tinkers or hunters, but live a pastoral life, like the Beduins. The Hazim live around Jauf or with the Ruwalla.

Sherarat

They live principally around Jauf, where they are collected into a considerable tribe, but members of the Sherarat are found scattered among the Ruwalla, Beni, Sakhr, Huwaitat, and Shammar. Among these tribes the Sherarat perform the menial tasks of servants and herdsmen.

The origin of the Sherarat is unknown. They are not as debased as the Sulubba, but they are far inferior to the Beduins. Their tents are usually very small and ragged, and their clothing even dirtier and much scantier than that of the ordinary Bedouin.